AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 16, 2000 AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 24, 2000 AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 3, 2000

SENATE BILL

No. 1607

Introduced by Senator Figueroa (Principal coauthor: Senator Johnson) (Coauthors: Senators Johannessen, *Morrow*, Murray, Ortiz, *Schiff*, Solis, and Speier)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alquist, Aroner, Havice, *Honda*, Keeley, Leach, *Lempert*, and Longville)

February 22, 2000

An act to amend Sections 1785.10, 1785.15, and 1785.16 of, and to add—Section Sections 1785.15.1, 1785.15.2, and 1785.20.2 to, the Civil Code, relating to consumer credit.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1607, as amended, Figueroa. Consumer credit reporting agencies.

Existing law governs the collection and disclosure of consumer credit reports. A consumer credit reporting agency must disclose the recipients of any consumer credit report regarding a consumer which the agency has furnished under specified circumstances. A consumer credit reporting agency must also make specified disclosures of, or provide notice regarding, information contained in a consumer credit report upon request of the consumer.

This bill would require a consumer credit reporting agency to disclose specified information, including the consumer's

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credit score and an explanation of the credit-scores score and the reason codes, if a credit score was furnished to a recipient of a credit report and, upon the consumer's request for a credit score and as part of the information provided in response to a request for a credit file. This bill would permit a consumer credit reporting agency to charge a reasonable fee, not to exceed \$4, for providing credit score information. This bill would also require a person using a credit score in connection with a loan secured by residential real property to provide to a consumer a copy of those same disclosures required above along with a specified notice to the loan applicant. This bill would provide that the user of the credit score is not obliged to explain the information provided, except as specified. The bill would also delete the requirement consumer make that the a request before reporting agencies credit make consumer specified disclosures of. or provide notice regarding, information contained in a consumer credit report. This bill would further provide that any contractual provisions contrary to specified consumer rights are void. The bill would also make related changes.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 1785.10 of the Civil Code is 2 amended to read:
- 3 1785.10. (a) Every consumer credit reporting
- 4 agency shall, upon request and proper identification of 5 any consumer, allow the consumer to visually inspect all
- 6 files maintained regarding that consumer at the time of
- 7 the request.
- 8 (b) Every consumer reporting agency, upon contact
- 9 by a consumer by telephone, mail, or in person regarding 10 information which may be contained in the agency files
- 11 regarding that consumer, shall promptly advise the
- 12 consumer of his or her rights under Sections 1785.19 and
- 13 1785.19.5, and of the obligation of the agency to provide
- 14 disclosure of the files in person, by mail, or by telephone

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pursuant to Section 1785.15, including the obligation of the agency to provide a decoded written version of the 3 file or a written copy of the file with an explanation of any code, including any credit score, or reason code as defined in subdivision (g) Section 1785.15.1, used, if the consumer so requests that copy. The disclosure shall be provided in the manner selected by the consumer, chosen from among any reasonable means available to 8 the consumer credit reporting agency.

agency shall determine the applicability subdivision (1) of Section 1785.17 and, where applicable, the agency shall inform the consumer of the rights under that section.

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- (c) All information on a consumer in the files of a 15 consumer credit reporting agency at the time of a request 16 for inspection under subdivision (a), shall be available for inspection, including the names and addresses of the 18 sources of information.
- (d) (1) The consumer credit reporting agency shall 20 also disclose the recipients of any consumer credit report on the consumer which the consumer credit reporting agency has furnished:
 - (A) For employment purposes within the two-year period preceding the request.
 - (B) For any other purpose within the 12-month period preceding the request.
- (2) (A) Disclosure of recipients of consumer credit 28 reports for purposes of this subdivision shall include the name of the recipient or, if applicable, the fictitious 30 business name under which the recipient does business disclosed in full. The identification shall also include the address of the recipient.
- (B) If a credit score was furnished, the disclosure shall 34 include:
- (i) All of the consumer's credit scores obtained in 36 connection with the loan application.
- (ii) The range of possible credit scores. 37
 - (iii) Any reason codes as defined in subdivision (g).

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(iv) The key factors that affected the credit score in the model used, including any reason code generated with respect to that credit score.

- (v) An explanation of the credit score and reason codes.
- (vi) The date each credit score and reason code was ereated.
- (vii) The name of the person or entity that provided the credit score or credit file upon which the credit score was based.
- (viii) The sources of credit repository information used.
- (e) The consumer credit reporting agency shall also 14 disclose a record of all inquiries received by the agency 15 in the 12-month period preceding the request that 16 identified the consumer in connection with a credit transaction which is not initiated by the consumer. This 18 record of inquiries shall include the name of each recipient making an inquiry.
- (f) For the purposes of this section, "credit score" 21 means a statistical tool used to predict the likelihood of a consumer paying back a loan. The numerical value or categorization and the methodology or modeling system designed for this analysis may also be referred to as a "risk predictor" or "risk score."
 - (g) For purposes of this section, "reason code" means any explanation of the uses, results, or impacts of the eredit score, a list of the credit-related information used to determine the credit score, and any related information used in connection with the determination of the credit scores.
- SEC. 2. Section 1785.15 of the Civil Code is amended 32 33 to read:
- 34 1785.15. (a) A consumer credit reporting 35 shall supply files and information required under Section 36 1785.10 during normal business hours and on reasonable notice. In addition to the disclosure provided by this chapter and any disclosures received by the consumer, the consumer has the right to request and receive all of 40 the following:

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(1) Either a decoded written version of the file or a 2 written copy of the file, including all information in the file at the time of the request, with an explanation of any code used.

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- (2) Any credit score or reason code generated, 6 transmitted, or stored by the credit reporting agency. A credit score for the consumer, the reason codes, and the related information as required by Section 1785.15.1.
- (3) A record of all inquiries, by recipient, which result 10 in the provision of information concerning the consumer in connection with a credit transaction that is not initiated by the consumer and which were received by the consumer credit reporting agency in the 12-month period 14 immediately preceding the request for disclosure under this section.
- (4) The recipients, including end users specified in 17 Section 1785.22, of any consumer credit report on the 18 consumer which the consumer credit reporting agency has furnished:
 - (A) For employment purposes within the two-year period preceding the request.
 - (B) For any other purpose within the 12-month period preceding the request.

Identification for purposes of this paragraph shall 25 include the name of the recipient or, if applicable, the fictitious business name under which the recipient does business disclosed in full. The identification shall also include the address of the recipient.

- (b) Files maintained on a consumer shall be disclosed promptly as follows:
- (1) In person, at the location where the consumer 32 credit reporting agency maintains the trained personnel required by subdivision (d), if he or she appears in person and furnishes proper identification.
- (2) By mail, if the consumer makes a written request 36 with proper identification for a copy of the file or a decoded written version of that file to be sent to the consumer at a specified address. A disclosure pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited in the United States mail, postage prepaid, within five business days after the

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consumer's written request for the disclosure is received by the consumer credit reporting agency. Consumer 3 credit reporting agencies complying with requests for 4 mailings under this section shall not be liable for 5 disclosures to third parties caused by mishandling of mail after the mailings leave the consumer reporting agencies.

- (3) A summary of all information contained in files on a consumer and required to be provided by Section 1785.10 shall be provided by telephone, if the consumer 10 has made a written request, with proper identification for telephone disclosure.
- (4) Information in a consumer's file required to be 13 provided in writing under this section may also be 14 disclosed in another form if authorized by the consumer 15 and if available from the consumer credit reporting 16 agency. For this purpose a consumer may request 17 disclosure in person pursuant to Section 1785.10, by 18 telephone upon disclosure of proper identification by the 19 consumer, by electronic means if available from the 20 consumer credit reporting agency, or by any other 21 reasonable means that is available from the consumer 22 credit reporting agency.
- (c) "Proper identification," as used in subdivision (b) 24 means that information generally deemed sufficient to 25 identify a person. Only if the consumer is unable to identify himself 26 reasonably or herself with may 27 information described above, a consumer credit information 28 reporting agency require additional 29 concerning the consumer's employment and personal or 30 family history in order to verify his or her identity.
- consumer credit reporting agency 32 provide trained personnel to explain to the consumer any 33 information furnished him or her pursuant to Section 34 1785.10.
- 35 (e) The consumer shall be permitted be. 36 accompanied by one other person of his or her choosing, who shall furnish reasonable identification. A consumer 38 credit reporting agency may require the consumer to 39 furnish a written statement granting permission to the

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reporting agency to discuss 1 consumer credit the consumer's file in that person's presence.

(f) Any written disclosure by a consumer credit 4 reporting agency to any consumer pursuant to this 5 section shall include a written summary of all rights the 6 consumer has under this title and in the case of a consumer credit reporting agency which compiles and maintains consumer credit reports on a nationwide basis, a toll-free telephone number which the consumer can use 10 to communicate with the consumer credit reporting agency. The written summary of rights required under 12 this subdivision is sufficient if in substantially the 13 following form:

"You have a right to obtain a copy of your credit file 15 from a consumer credit reporting agency. You may be 16 charged a reasonable fee not exceeding eight dollars (\$8). 17 There is no fee, however, if you have been turned down 18 for credit, employment, insurance, or a rental dwelling 19 because of information in your credit report within the 20 preceding 60 days. The consumer credit reporting agency 21 must provide someone to help you interpret the 22 information in your credit file.

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You have a right to dispute inaccurate information by the consumer credit 24 contacting reporting 25 directly. However, neither you nor any credit repair 26 company or credit service organization has the right to accurate, current, and verifiable information 28 removed from your credit report. Under the Federal Fair 29 Credit Reporting Act, the consumer credit reporting 30 agency must remove accurate, negative information 31 from your report only if it is over seven years old. 32 Bankruptcy information can be reported for 10 years.

If you have notified a credit reporting agency in writing 34 that you dispute the accuracy of information in your file, 35 the consumer credit reporting agency must then, within 36 30 business days, reinvestigate and modify or remove 37 inaccurate information. The consumer credit reporting agency may not charge a fee for this service. Any pertinent information and copies of all documents you SB 1607 **—8** —

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1 have concerning an error should be given to the 2 consumer credit reporting agency.

If reinvestigation does not resolve the dispute to your 4 satisfaction, you may send a brief statement to the 5 consumer credit reporting agency to keep in your file, 6 explaining why you think the record is inaccurate. The consumer credit reporting agency must include your 8 statement about disputed information in a report it issues about you.

You have a right to receive a record of all inquiries 11 relating to a credit transaction initiated in—six 12 months preceding your request. This record shall include the 13 recipients of any consumer credit report.

You may request in writing that the information 15 contained in your file not be provided to a third party for 16 marketing purposes.

You have a right to bring civil action against anyone, 18 including a consumer credit reporting agency, who 19 improperly obtains access to a file, knowingly or willfully 20 misuses file data, or fails to correct inaccurate file data."

- SEC. 3. Section 1785.15.1 is added to the Civil Code, 22 to read:
- 1785.15.1. (a) Upon the consumer's request for a 24 credit score, and as part of the information provided in 25 response to a consumer's request for a credit file, a 26 consumer credit reporting agency shall supply to a 27 *consumer all of the following:*
- 28 (1) The consumer's current credit score 29 consumer's most recent credit score that was previously 30 calculated by the credit reporting agency.
- (2) The range of possible credit scores under the 32 model used.
- (3) Not less than four key factors that adversely 33 34 affected the consumer's credit score, including any 35 reason code generated with respect to that credit score.
- (4) An explanation of the credit score and reason 36 37 codes.
 - (5) The date the credit score was created.

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(6) The name of the person or entity that provided the 2 credit score or credit file upon which the credit score was created.

- (b) For the purposes of this section, "credit score" 5 means a statistical tool used to predict the likelihood of 6 default on a loan. The numerical value or categorization and the methodology or modeling system designed for 8 this analysis may also be referred to as a "risk predictor" 9 or "risk score" and for the purposes of this section are 10 included within the term "credit score." "Credit score" does not include other elements of the underwriting 12 process or underwriting decision.
- (c) For the purposes of this section, "reason code" 14 means any explanation of the uses, results, or impacts of 15 the credit score, and any related information used in 16 connection with the determination of a credit score.

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- (d) The information required by this section shall be 18 provided in the same manner as the information described in Section 1785.15.
- 20 SEC. 4. Section 1785.15.2 is added to the Civil Code, 21 to read:
- 1785.15.2. (a) In complying with Section 1785.15.1, a 23 consumer credit reporting agency shall supply the 24 consumer with a credit score that is derived from a credit 25 scoring model that is widely used by that consumer 26 reporting agency in connection with residential real property loans.
- (b) A consumer credit reporting agency may charge 29 a reasonable fee, not to exceed four dollars (\$4), for 30 providing the information required under Section 1785.15.1.
- SEC. 5. Section 1785.16 of the Civil Code is amended 32 33 to read:
- 34 1785.16. (a) If the completeness or accuracy of any 35 item of information contained in his or her file is disputed 36 by a consumer, and the dispute is conveyed directly to the 37 consumer credit reporting agency by the consumer or 38 user on behalf of the consumer, the consumer credit reporting agency shall within a reasonable period of time and without charge, reinvestigate and record the current

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status of the disputed information before the end of the 30-business-day period beginning on the date the agency 3 receives notice of the dispute from the consumer or user, the consumer credit reporting 4 unless agency 5 reasonable grounds to believe and determines that the 6 dispute by the consumer is frivolous or irrelevant, including by reason of a failure of the consumer to provide sufficient information, as requested by consumer credit reporting agency, to investigate 10 dispute. Unless the consumer credit reporting agency determines that the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant, 12 before the end of the five-business-day period beginning 13 on the date the consumer credit reporting agency 14 receives notice of dispute under this section, the agency shall notify any person who provided information in 16 dispute at the address and in the manner specified by the person. A consumer credit reporting agency may require 17 18 that disputes by consumers be in writing.

- (b) In conducting that reinvestigation the consumer 19 20 credit reporting agency shall review and consider all 21 relevant information submitted by the consumer with 22 respect to the disputed item of information. If the 23 consumer credit reporting agency determines that the 24 dispute is frivolous or irrelevant, it shall notify the 25 consumer by mail or, if authorized by the consumer for 26 that purpose, by any other means available to the 27 consumer credit reporting agency, within five business after that determination is made that it is 29 terminating its reinvestigation of the item of information. 30 In this notification, the consumer credit reporting agency shall state the specific reasons why it has determined that 32 the consumer's dispute is frivolous or irrelevant. If the disputed item of information is found to be inaccurate, 34 missing, or can no longer be verified by the evidence submitted, the consumer credit reporting agency shall 36 promptly add, correct, or delete that information from the consumer's file. 37
- 38 (c) No information may be reinserted in a consumer's 39 file after having been deleted pursuant to this section 40 unless the person who furnished the information certifies

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that the information is accurate. If any information deleted from a consumer's file is reinserted in the file, the consumer credit reporting agency shall promptly notify consumer of the reinsertion in writing or, if authorized by the consumer for that purpose, by any other means available to the consumer credit reporting agency. As part of, or in addition to, this notice the consumer credit reporting agency shall, within five business days of reinserting the information, provide the 10 consumer in writing (1) a statement that the disputed information has been reinserted, (2) a notice that the agency will provide to the consumer, within 15 days 12 13 following a request, the name, address, and telephone 14 number of any furnisher of information contacted or which contacted the consumer credit reporting agency in 15 with the reinsertion, (3) the 16 connection 17 telephone number of the consumer credit reporting agency that the consumer can use to obtain this name, address, and telephone number, and (4) a notice that the 20 consumer has the right to a reinvestigation of the 21 information reinserted by the consumer credit reporting agency and to add a statement to his or her file disputing 23 the accuracy or completeness of the information.

(d) A consumer credit reporting agency shall provide 25 written notice to the consumer of the results of any reinvestigation under this subdivision, within five days of 27 completion of the reinvestigation. The notice shall 28 include (1) a statement that the reinvestigation is completed, (2) a consumer credit report that is based on 30 the consumer's file as that file is revised as a result of the reinvestigation, (3) a description or indication of any 32 changes made in the consumer credit report as a result of those revisions to the consumer's file and a description of 34 any changes made or sought by the consumer that were not made and an explanation why they were not made, 36 (4) a notice that, if requested by the consumer, a description of the procedure used to determine the accuracy and completeness of the information shall be provided to the consumer by the consumer credit 40 reporting agency, including the name, business address.

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and telephone number of any furnisher of information contacted in connection with that information, (5) a notice that the consumer has the right to add a statement the consumer's file disputing the accuracy 5 completeness of the information, (6) a notice that the consumer has the right to request that the consumer reporting agency furnish notifications subdivision (h), (7) a notice that the dispute will remain on file with the agency as long as the credit information 10 is used, and (8) a statement about the details of the dispute will be furnished to any recipient as long as the 12 credit information is retained in the agency's data base. 13 A consumer credit reporting agency shall provide the 14 notice pursuant to this subdivision respecting procedure used determine the 15 to accuracy and 16 completeness of information, not later than 15 days after 17 receiving a request from the consumer. 18

- (e) The presence of information in the consumer's file 19 that contradicts the contention of the consumer shall not, 20 in and of itself, constitute reasonable grounds believing the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant.
- (f) If the consumer credit reporting agency 23 determines that the dispute is frivolous or irrelevant, or 24 if the reinvestigation does not resolve the dispute, or if the consumer's 25 information is reinserted into the 26 pursuant to subdivision (c), the consumer may file a brief 27 statement setting forth the nature of the dispute. The agency may limit these 28 consumer credit reporting statements to not more than 100 words if it provides the consumer with assistance in writing a clear summary of the dispute.
- (g) Whenever a statement of dispute is filed, the 33 consumer credit reporting agency shall. in any 34 subsequent consumer credit report containing 35 information in question, clearly note that the information 36 is disputed by the consumer and shall include in the report either the consumer's statement or a clear and accurate summary thereof.
- (h) Following the deletion of information from a 39 consumer's file pursuant to this section, or following the

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filing of a statement of dispute pursuant to subdivision (f), the consumer credit reporting agency, at the request of the consumer, shall furnish notification that the item of been deleted or that the 4 information has disputed. 5 information is In the case of disputed information, the notification shall include the statement or summary of the dispute filed pursuant to subdivision (f). This notification shall be furnished to any person who has, within two years prior to the deletion or the filing of 10 dispute. received a consumer credit 11 concerning the consumer for employment purposes, or who has, within 12 months of the deletion or the filing of 12 13 dispute. received a consumer credit 14 concerning the consumer for any other purpose, if these contained 15 consumer credit reports the deleted 16 disputed information. The consumer credit reporting agency shall clearly and conspicuously disclose to the 17 18 consumer his or her rights to make a request for this notification. The disclosure shall be made at or prior to the time the information is deleted pursuant to 21 the consumer's statement regarding section or disputed information is received pursuant to subdivision 23 24

(i) A consumer credit reporting agency shall prevent the reappearance in a consumer's file and in consumer credit reports of information that has been deleted pursuant to this section and not reinserted pursuant to subdivision (c).

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- (i) If the consumer's dispute is resolved by deletion of 30 the disputed information within three business days, beginning with the day the consumer credit reporting agency receives notice of the dispute in accordance with subdivision (a), and provided that verification thereof is provided to the consumer in writing within five business days following the deletion, then the consumer credit 36 reporting agency shall be exempt from requirements for further action under subdivisions (d), (f), and (g).
- 38 (k) If a consumer submits to a credit reporting agency a copy of a valid police report filed pursuant to Section 530.5 of the Penal Code, the consumer credit reporting

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agency shall promptly and permanently block reporting any information that the consumer alleges appears on his or her credit report as a result of a violation of Section 4 530.5 of the Penal Code so that the information cannot be 5 reported. The consumer credit reporting agency shall promptly notify the furnisher of the information that the blocked. information has been SO Furnishers information and consumer credit reporting agencies shall ensure that information is unblocked only upon a 10 preponderance of the evidence establishing the facts 11 required under paragraph (1),(2),or (3). blocked information shall be 12 permanently unblocked 13 only if: (1) the information was blocked due to fraud, or 14 (2) the consumer agrees that the blocked information, or 15 portions of the blocked information, were blocked in 16 error, or (3) the consumer knowingly obtained possession 17 of goods, services, or moneys as a result of the blocked 18 transaction or transactions or the consumer should have known that he or she obtained possession of goods, services, or moneys as a result of the blocked transaction or transactions. If blocked information is unblocked 21 pursuant to this subdivision, the consumer shall be promptly notified in the same manner as consumers are notified of the reinsertion of information pursuant to The prior presence of the blocked 25 subdivision (c). 26 information in the consumer credit reporting agency's 27 file on the consumer is not evidence of whether the consumer knew or should have known that he or she obtained possession of any goods, services, or moneys. For 30 the purposes this subdivision, fraud of demonstrated by circumstantial evidence. In unblocking information pursuant to this subdivision, furnishers and 33 consumer credit reporting agencies shall be subject to 34 their respective requirements pursuant this title to regarding the completeness and accuracy of information. 35

36 (*l*) Any provision in a contract that is contrary to the 37 rights of a consumer as prescribed by this section is void.

38 SEC. 4.

39 SEC. 6. Section 1785.20.2 is added to the Civil Code, 40 to read:

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1785.20.2. (a) Any person who uses a consumer credit score as defined in Section 1785.15.1 in connection with a loan secured by residential real property shall provide the following to the consumer as soon as reasonably practicable:

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- (1) A copy of the information provided for subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 1785.10. Section 1785.15.1 that was obtained from a credit reporting agency or was developed by the user of the information.
- (2) A copy of the following notice, which shall include the name, address, and telephone number of any credit bureau providing a credit score for the consumer:

NOTICE TO THE HOME LOAN APPLICANT

In connection with your application for a home loan, the lender must disclose to you credit information about you that a credit bureau or the lender has developed 20 including any credit scores.

As part of this disclosure, you are to receive your "credit 22 score" or "risk score," the date of the score, the range of 23 scores, a copy of your credit report, an explanation of the 24 credit scores and reason codes, and a list of the key factors 25 that affected the credit score. This score is a computer

The credit score is a computer generated summary 27 based on information a credit bureau or lender has on file. The scores are based on data about your credit history and payment patterns. Credit scores are important because 30 they are used to assist the lender in determining whether you will get a mortgage to buy a home. They may also be used to determine what interest rate you may be offered on the mortgage. Credit scores can change over time.

It is important that you review the credit related 35 information that is being furnished to make sure it is 36 accurate. Credit records may vary from one company to another.

If you have questions about your credit score or the credit information that is furnished to you, contact the credit bureau at the address and telephone number SB 1607 — 16 —

1 provided with this notice, or contact the lender, if the 2 lender developed or generated the credit score. The 3 credit bureau plays no part in the decision to take any 4 action on the loan application and is unable to provide 5 with specific reasons for our decision on a loan 6 application.

If you have questions concerning the terms of the loan, contact the lender.

9 (b) This section shall not obligate the user of a credit 10 score to explain the information provided for in 11 subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of 12 Section 1785.10, unless that information was developed or 13 generated by the user.